

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9888

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CNCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 11762

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, JA

SUBJECT: DELAY IN RETURN OF TACHIKAWA AB

REF: STATE 174894

1. EMBASSY IS SYMPATHETIC TO DEPENDENT HOUSING PROBLEMS THAT WILL ARISE AS RESULT OF SCHEDULED RETURN OF TACHIKAWA AIR BASE TO JAPANESE CONTROL. WE ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT REOPENING OF TACHIKAWA ISSUE WOULD NOT BE VIEWED WITH FAVOR BY GOJ AND COULD, CONCEIVABLY, DAMAGE OTHER SECURITY INTERESTS IN JAPAN. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE, FOR EXAMPLE, SERIOUS LOCAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO EXTENSION OF US FORCES' OCCUPANCY OF TACHIKAWA FROM THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN COUNTING ON REVISION OF BASE, INCLUDING TACHIKAWA CITY LEADERSHIP. US KANTO PLAIN CONSOLIDATION PLAN, CALLING INTER ALIA FOR TOTAL RELEASE OF TACHIKAWA, WAS FIRST TABLED BY US IN FEBRUARY 1972 AND FORMED BASIS FOR FIRM AGREEMENT WITH GOJ A YEAR LATER. WHILE TIMETABLE HAS SLIPPED SOME BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT, ESSENTIALS OF PLAN, INCLUDING TACHIKAWA RELEASE (NOW DUE OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER), HAVE REMAINED INTACT. ANY SUBSTANTIAL DELAY IN RELEASE WOULD BE LIKELY TO CALL
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INTO QUESTION US CREDIBILITY AND ABILITY TO ANTICIPATE AND PLAN FOR FUTURE NEEDS. HAVING MADE SOLEMN COMMITMENT TO RETURN FACILITY AFTER JAPAN FULFILLED CERTAIN CONDITIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT REOPENING ISSUE COULD HAVE DELETERIOUS ACT ON USG EFFORTS IN REGARD TO OTHER CONSOLIDATION PROGRAMS CALLING FOR REPLACEMENT FACILITIES.

2. FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO BE KEPT IN MIND IS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANDJEAPPROACH IN REGARD TO TACHIKAWA AND ON-GOING LABOR-COST-SHARING NEGOTIATIONS. AS EMBASSY HAS PREVIOUSLY

REPORTED (TOKYO 9000), WE HAVE HAD STRONG INTIMATIONS THAT GOJ MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO MEET MOST OF OUR REQUESTS FOR LABOR-COST RELIEF BUT MAY BE WILLING TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN REGARD TO FACILITIES INVESTMENT. WHILE WE MAY IN TIME BE FACED WITH A CHOICE, OUR INCLINATION IS TO PURSUE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM RELIEF FOR LABOR COSTS WHILE RESISTING, AT THIS STAGE AT LEAST, TEMPTATION OF FACILITIES TRADE-OFFS. SHOULD WE BROACH AIR FORCE HOUSING AT THIS JUNCTURE, GOJ MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BE FORTHCOMING (BY OFFERING TO BUILD ADDITIONAL HOUSING IN SUPPORT OF YOKOTA WITH OR WITHOUT AGREEMENT TO DEFER RETURN OF TACHIKAWA HOUSING AREA) BUT, IF SO, IT MIGHT WELL BE AT EXPENSE OF LABOR-COST RELIEF. ON OTHER HAND, WE DO NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER HELP WITH FACILITIES ONCE WE HAVE SECURED MAXIMUM LABOR-COST RELIEF. IN ESSENCE, THIS IS MATTER OF TIMING, AND WE RECOGNIZE THAT UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS PRESSURE FOR DECISION ON TACHIKAWA.

3. IN VIEW OF CONSIDERATIONS PARA 1, WE WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND AGAINST PRESENTING ANY PROPOSAL IN JOINT COMMITTEE WITHOUT CAREFULLY PAVING WAY THROUGH LOW-KEY, INFORMAL SOUNDINGS. IF SO INSTRUCTED, WE ARE PREPARED
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TO INQUIRE IN FIRST INSTANCE AS TO CURRENT STATUS OF GOJ PLANS FOR TACHIKAWA, AND IF THERE IS NO TIME PRESSURE FOR FULL TACHIKAWA RETURN, TO TAKE READING ON POSSIBILITY OF RETAINING HOUSING AREA AS DESIRED FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS. IF, HOWEVER, WE MEET WITH GOJ RESISTANCE, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO DROP MATTER.

4. REFTTEL COUCHES ISSUE IN TERMS OF WESTPAC READJUSTMENTS KEYED TO PHILIPPINE BASE NEGOTIATIONS. IF IT IS LIKELY THAT ADDITIONAL AIR UNITS ARE TO BE MOVED FROM PHILIPPINES TO YOKOTA, WE RECOMMEND THAT WE LET THIS BE KNOWN TO GOJ AS PART OF BACKGROUND OF APPROACH ON TACHIKAWA RETENTION, EVEN THOUGH IT NEED NOT APPEAR IN A FORMAL PROPOSAL. TO HAVE MATTER COME UP SUBSEQUENTLY WOULD, WE FEEL, BE EMBARRASSING IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOJ OFFICIALS CONCERNED SHOULD IT APPEAR THIS WAS IN BACK OF OUR MINDS ALL ALONG. IF, ON OTHER HAND, THIS IS SIMPLY MATTER OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING -- IT IS OUR IMPRESSION PHILIPPINE BASE NEGOTIATIONS ARE FAR FROM STAGE OF PROCEEDING WITH RELOCATION PLANS -- WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO INJECT THIS ISSUE INTO ANY DISCUSSION. RELATED FACTOR OF COURSE WOULD BE GOJ PERCEPTION OF ANY RELOCATION IN TERMS OF KOREAN

TROOP WITHDRAWALS. WE ARE ON RECORD AS ASSURING JAPANESE
WITHDRAWALS WILL HAVE MINIMAL EFFECT ON US FORCES JAPAN,
AND WE WOULD NOT WISH IT TO APPEAR THAT ANY BUILDUP IS TO
THE CONTRARY SO RELATED.
MANSFIELD

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